

Singapore 87 Update

Networking: Building Bridges

Bridges bring people together, and often, bringing people together is the first step toward accomplishing goals that are unattainable when people are isolated from one another.

Singapore '87 is a time of bridge-building. As participants develop relationships, bridges will be built. One major reason behind the conference is to provide an atmosphere to allow networking to take place. The planning committee hopes it will introduce ideas of cooperation in outreach, sending younger leaders home to their countries determined to network with other leaders.

Since its beginning in 1974, the Lausanne movement has been in the business of building bridges – bridges of cooperation and understanding among Christian leaders everywhere so that the whole church can take the whole gospel to the whole world. The word "networking" has become popular to describe this kind of person-to-person bridge-building.

Networks are made up of people who are committed to a common purpose, have communication links among themselves, and have voluntary working relationships based on working *with* one another and not *for* one another. A networking relationship allows Christian organizations and individuals to work together with one another when that is possible, given the reality that cooperation is difficult in a world where there are over



20,000 separate Christian denominations and thousands of para-church organizations.

There is a desperate need for bridge-building. The task of world evangelization is too large for needless duplication and misunderstanding caused by lack of communication. The ministry of the LCWE is to facilitate networking relationships: through conferences, consultation, publications, and through the ministry of Christian leaders and specialists.

There is an old African proverb that says, "Nothing happens until people talk." Who can say what God will do in his world when Christians come together to pray, plan, study and then go on to work together for world evangelization?

How to "Network"

Just how does one do this strange activity called "networking?" Is it just another word for talking with friends and strangers at conferences? Actually, conferences are a good place to build networks of relationships, but many attend conferences without really establishing friendships that will mean much to them in the future.

Of course, everyone has a circle of local friends and family that they trust. Networking means reaching beyond the immediate circle of country, denomination, and ministry for friends who will exchange trust, resources, ideas, and encouragement. Friendships begun at Singapore 87 can

extend far into the future as leaders find creative ways to cooperate in seeing the world evangelized.

How does one "network?" First, by striving for *awareness* of other leaders and their efforts. Make it a habit to observe the uniqueness and beauty of other ministries. Ask other leaders whom they look to for positive models and practical help. Learn to respect and speak well of diverse ministries.

Second, seek out personal *acquaintance* with others. Share your dreams and visions. Reveal some of your difficulties and challenges. Pray together for shared concerns. Be sure to find out ways to continue

contact with newly met friends.

Third, you might find ways to be of ongoing *encouragement* and resource to others. Conversations during Singapore 87 may expose ways in which you could be a helpful resource or offer ideas. In the same way, you can find yourself stimulated with some fresh concepts. Cultivate an openness to counsel and wisdom from new friends.

The point of networking at Singapore 87 is cooperating in world evangelization for years to come. In a sense, networking begins after the conference as we continue to build each other for the purpose of Christ.

Small Groups Develop Relationships

The small groups meeting daily for an hour play an important part in the conference. In each of about 45 groups, five to seven participants from different parts of the world may get to know each other well while learning from one another's perspectives.

Small group co-ordinator Ellie Lau from Hong Kong categorized participants in six regions of the world to select a representative from each region for the groups. (The exception was the Spanish-speaking people, who are in six groups of their own.)

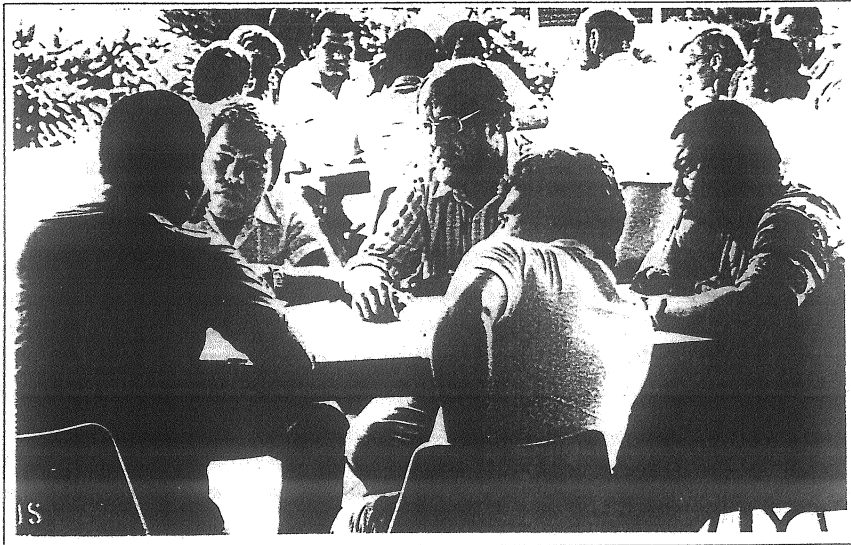
"They'll get to know each other fairly well spending eight hours on both personal and reflective questions," says Thena Ayres, assistant to Ramez Atallah.

Not only do the groups represent a mix of cultures; they also cover a

variety of ministries. For example, one group might have a pastor, a street worker, a child worker, a youth worker, and a rural missionary. "We hope that they will glean how God is working in a whole variety of ministries," Ayres explains.

The groups also make the conference more personal, suggests Lau, pointing out that people can tend to feel lonely and not connected. The set-up "guarantees that people will get to know some people well and opens up the door to be able to understand different cultures and be able to network," she says.

The groups are responses to the morning expositions. Each session allows participants to speak from their experience in response to the Bible teaching they have just heard.



Leadership Models from the book of Acts

The biblical models of leadership found in Acts form the substance of the expositions being delivered each morning this week by Ajith Fernando, national Youth For Christ director in Sri Lanka.

"One of the things I'm really keen to stress in this is we seem to be so influenced by secular models, and we want to glean from the Bible," said Fernando. The three characters Fernando is discussing are Stephen (the "radiant radical"), Philip, whom he describes as a "typical evangelist, and Barnabas, the "multiplier" who brought up other leaders.

Fernando has been studying the book of Acts closely for about 10 years. During his final year at Fuller Seminary, he says, he studied the first 13 chapters in his devotions, covering the section about 15-20 times in four months. Anticipating his return to Sri Lanka to lead Youth For Christ after studying in the United States, he knew Acts was one of the books he needed to study to be able to lead properly.

In his first exposition Tuesday morning Fernando outlined how problems were dealt with in Acts 6, emphasizing the needs for the ministry of prayer and the ministry of the Word. Studying the Bible is essential because "we must know what God's thoughts are, and those thoughts are found in the Scriptures."

News You Can Use

Bible Society Staff: You are invited to the Singapore Bible Society on Thursday, 4 June, to have lunch with Allan Ang, General Secretary, and to spend some time in the Bible House. Contact Bob Bennett in Sheares Hall room C210 to arrange transport.

Post office, currency exchange, and international telephoning: A full-service post office is located on the ground floor of the Yusof Ishak House student center located next to Kent Ridge Hall. It is open from 8:30-17:00.

Laundry: Thursday morning, June 4, there will be local laundry service available. Fill out a laundry checklist with your name and room number and leave your clothes with the steward at the table in the lobby of your residence hall. Delivery will be the afternoon of the next day. To do your own laundry, free soap is available from your residence hall steward. Machines are free.

Message Board: Check the message Board located at Lecture Hall 27.

Shuttle bus: A shuttle bus will take you from your residence hall before each plenary and workshop session and return you there for lunch. Shuttle service begins 30 minutes before each session from the BUS STOPS in front of Raffles and at the marked tops on Lower Kent Ridge Road.



Singapore '87 is sponsored by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization

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